

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Ruwet Calls for Special Session to Protect Property Rights Says Legislature Should Not Delay on Important Issue of Eminent Domain



State Rep. Anne L. Ruwet, R-65th, Torrington, today called for a special legislative session this summer to limit the state's eminent domain laws that have been used to seize private property and turn it over to developers who then profit from economic development projects. She is co-sponsoring a proposed bill to protect property

owners.

"We should not wait on something so important as this," said Rep. Ruwet. "The issue has already been studied at great length."

"Private property rights are at the heart of the American political system," said Rep. Ruwet. "Government should be able to take people's homes, only in very limited cases. The Connecticut legislature needs to take action now to limit this power of government to take property for private developers."

House Republican Leader Robert M. Ward of North Branford has spearheaded the drive to protect property owners' rights in the wake of a controversial U.S. Supreme Court decision involving the city of New London and residents of the Fort Trumbull area who challenged the use of eminent domain.

By a 5-4 margin, the high court ruled the state's eminent domain laws were constitutional but invited Connecticut to limit them if it wanted.

She added, "I have chosen to co-sponsor this important legislation that we are pushing to introduce in a special session either later this month or in early August when the legislature is mandated to return to the Capitol to take up matters that were vetoed by Gov. M. Jodi Rell during the regular session."

"This is not a complicated matter as opponents have suggested," said state Rep. Ruwet. "You either stand with the individual homeowners who don't want to sell their homes and be forced to move, or you stand on the side of big government and powerful developers."

Rep. Ward's proposal deletes from existing state law six lines that currently permit development agencies to seize property for economic development. Local and state governments could still exercise eminent domain to deal with truly blighted properties that pose health or safety hazards or for public works projects including schools, roads and other infrastructure improvements.

Rep. Ruwet serves the 65th Assembly District of Torrington in the state House of Representatives.